



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2013

IAC Annual Report General Instructions

Annex IV of the Convention text states that each Contracting Party shall hand in an Annual Report. To complete this Annual Report, Focal Points should consult with various stakeholders involved in sea turtle issues. If you have any questions regarding this Annual Report, please write to the PT Secretariat at secretario@iacseaturtle.org

Please note that the date to submit this Annual Report is **April 30, 2013**.

Part I (General Information)

Please fill out the following tables. Add additional rows if necessary.

a._ Focal Point

Institution	NOAA Fisheries Service
Name	Alexis T. Gutiérrez
Date Annual Report submitted	

b._ Agency or Institution responsible for preparing this report

Name of Agency or Institution	NOAA Fisheries Service
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c._ Others who participated in the preparation of this report

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Part II (Policy and Management)

a. General description of activities carried out for the protection and conservation of sea turtles

In accordance with Articles IX and XVIII of the text of the Convention, each Party shall establish monitoring programs, policies and plans for implementation at a national level for the protection and conservation of sea turtles and their habitat.

As a result, the Party shall report on the action plans, management plan or other types of instruments, describing their location, the species considered and the actions implemented by governmental, non-governmental and private institutions related to sea turtles.

In addition to the above, please fill out the following tables and explain the level of progress in the comments column.

	YES/NO/ In Progress	Comments
Does your country have a national plan of action in accordance with Article XVIII?	Yes	There are national recovery plans for each species. Links to each of these plans were sent to the IAC Secretariat in 2012.
Does your country have policies and programs at local and regional levels in accordance with Article XVIII?	Yes	
Does your country have monitoring programs in accordance with Article IX?	Yes	

b. National legislation and international instruments related to sea turtles adopted in the preceding year

Describe any national regulations, international agreements and other legal instruments adopted during the preceding year (April 30, 2012-April 30, 2013) related to sea turtles and/or relevant activities. Provide a reference and attach the digital file



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for the legislation and its corresponding number. The laws adopting the international legislation should be included, when they exist.

Since last year's annual report the United States has not adopted any new legislation pertaining to sea turtles. However, we have taken several administrative and regulatory actions. Below is a list of these actions.

- June 4, 2012 – The US National Marine Fisheries Service announced the denial of a petition to revise designated critical habitat for Leatherback sea turtles
<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/06/04/2012-13528/listing-endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-designating-critical-habitat-12-month-determination>
- August 8, 2012 – The US National Marine Fisheries Service announced that a petition to delist the green turtle in Hawaii may be warranted and initiated a status review.
<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/08/01/2012-18768/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-90-day-finding-on-a-petition-to-delist-the-green-turtle-in-hawaii>
- October 4, 2012 – The US National Marine Fisheries Service revised the limits on sea turtle interactions in the Hawaii shallow-set longline fishery. This allows the fleet to interact with up to 26 leatherback sea turtles and 34 loggerhead sea turtles each fishing year. Once, those limits are met the fishery must close. This increase in interactions was based on analysis of several years worth of data in this fishery that has 100% observer coverage.
<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/10/04/2012-24536/western-pacific-pelagic-fisheries-revised-limits-on-sea-turtle-interactions-in-the-hawaii>
- October 12, 2012 – The US National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the initiation of five-year reviews for Kemp's ridley, olive ridley, leatherback and hawksbill sea turtles.
<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/10/10/2012-24935/endangered-and-threatened-species-initiation-of-5-year-review-for-kemps-ridley-olive-ridley>
- December 26, 2012 – The US National Marine Fisheries Service decided not to place additional fisheries on the list of fisheries that could be required to carry an observer. However, those fisheries that were identified in 2010 remain on the list and are eligible to carry an observer until December 31, 2014.
<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/12/26/2012-30966/2013-annual-determination-for-sea-turtle-observer-requirement>
- June 2013 – The Five Year Review for Hawksbill sea turtles was issued.
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/species/hawksbillseaturtle2013_5yearreview.pdf



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National Legislation		
Type and name of legal instrument (No.)	Description (Range of application)	Sanctions(s) Imposed
Endangered Species Act	Global	Prohibition of take of listed species unless exempted under Section 7 and Section 10 in U.S. waters
International Instruments		
Treaty, Convention, Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding		Year signed and/or ratified
InterAmerican Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles		2000
Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle MOU		2001

Note: If this is the first time a country is submitting this information, please include all pertinent national legislation and international instruments currently in force.

c. _ Actions for compliance with national and international legislation

c.1 IAC Resolutions

Fill in the following tables for each of the IAC Resolutions listed below. In the case that a Resolution does not apply to your country, please mark the box **RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY**, and if a specific question does not apply, please mark the column **DOES NOT APPLY**. If you need more space to describe these actions, please attach additional pages and note the resolution and question number to which you are responding.

Resolution CIT-COP2-2004 R1: Conservation of leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP2-2004-R1, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

			RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY	
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1a) Have you created	x		Recovery Plan for Pacific Leatherbacks http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/recovery/turtle_leatherback_pacific.pdf	



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conservation plans and long-term programs that can reverse the critical situation of the leatherback turtle in the Eastern Pacific?				
1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs?	X		Yes, the United States is taking action to minimize interactions with Leatherbacks in domestic fisheries by using gear modifications and, as necessary, time area closures. In addition, we are working closely with several countries in the Eastern Tropical Pacific to try and reduce leatherback interactions by using large circle hooks and whole finfish	
2a) Have you taken conservation measures to significantly reduce the use of leatherback turtle products and by-products?	X		Trade of sea turtles and their parts is illegal in the United States.	
2b) Do you evaluate these conservation measures?	X		Yes, the status of the species are formally reviewed on an approximate five-year basis, this review includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of conservation measures. Additionally, the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conduct consultations on all federal actions that may affect sea turtles. During these consultations, conservation efforts are evaluated.	
3a) If your country has leatherback turtle nesting beaches in the Eastern Pacific: Have you taken conservation measures to protect the nesting sites and their associated habitats?				N/A
3b) Do you evaluate the conservation measures taken to protect those nesting sites and their associated habitats?				N/A
4. Has your country adopted fishing techniques that reduce incidental	Yes		With respect to Western Pacific Leatherbacks, we have taken significant measures to reduce fishery bycatch. The California drift-gillnet fishery is currently closed. The Hawaii shallow-set fishery is managed through 100% observer monitoring and the fishery closes if the annual limit of interaction with leatherbacks is reached. The updated regulation for this fishery can be	



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capture and mortality of this species?			<p>found at https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/10/04/2012-24536/western-pacific-pelagic-fisheries-revised-limits-on-sea-turtle-interactions-in-the-hawaii. U.S. fishermen are required to use large circle hooks with whole finfish baits in longline fisheries known to interact with Leatherbacks in the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the Gulf of Mexico. Fishers are also provided safe-handling gear to increase turtles' chances of survival post-release. The US has also declared Critical Habitat for leatherback turtles along the US West Coast that further limits anthropogenic impacts to leatherback turtles in the region.</p> <p>In the Atlantic, the United States fleet is required to use large circle hooks (18/0 to 16/0) with whole finfish in the Northeast Distant to reduce the likelihood of fouling hook and entanglement of leatherbacks. The regulation can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/fr/fr69-40734.pdf.</p>	
5a) Is your country collecting information on incidental capture of leatherbacks in the following fisheries:				
Artisanal fisheries				
i) Long-line				NA
ii) Gillnets				NA
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				NA
Industrial fisheries				
i) Long-line	Yes		https://grunt.sefsc.noaa.gov/P_QryLDS/download/TM629_TM-632.pdf?id=LDS http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/OBS/obs_hi_ll_ds_rpts.html http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/OBS/obs_hi_ll_ss_rpts.html	
ii) Gillnets	Yes, but not for all fisheries		http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/fmd/observer/catch0910.htm https://grunt.sefsc.noaa.gov/P_QryLDS/download/TM642_TM-629.pdf?id=LDS	
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))	Pot and trap Scallop trawl/dredge fishery		We currently do not have any bycatch estimates for leatherbacks in trap/pot fisheries. The majority of the information on the occurrence of these interactions is from strandings and a disentanglement program in the northeastern United States.	
5b) Have you provided the IAC with information on incidental capture of leatherbacks in the following fisheries:				
Artisanal fishing				
i) Long-line				NA



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ii) Gillnets				NA
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))			THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT HAVE ANY FISHERIES THAT IT CONSIDERS ARTISANAL	NA
Industrial fisheries				
i) Long-line			See above	
ii) Gillnets			See above	
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))			See above	
6. Have you established agreements and/or understandings with countries fishing within international waters to adopt fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture of leatherback turtles? List which countries:	Yes		<p>Through our participation in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations we have worked to secure binding measures to reduce entanglement in FADs and to use large circle hooks in pelagic longline fisheries. These organizations include IATTC, ICCAT and WCPFC.</p> <p>The United States is currently working on a cooperative experiment with Taiwan to understand target catch retention in deepset bigeye tuna fisheries in the Atlantic using large circle hooks (18/0 ringed) with whole finfish. During this experiment, we have had entanglements and foul hooking with Atlantic leatherbacks. The U.S. and Taiwanese colleagues submitted a paper to the July 2013 ICCAT SCRS Ecosystem working group on the results of this work. This paper is entitled SCRS/2013/129 Circle hook effectiveness for catch of target species and incidental catch of sea turtles on a Taiwanese longline fishing vessel in the tropical Atlantic Ocean. Huang H., Swimme Y.r, Bigelow K., Gutierrez A. and Foster D</p>	
7. Have you encouraged other non-Party states to the IAC, carrying out activities that affect leatherback turtles, to adopt measures in favor of their conservation, by means of bilateral, multilateral or regional contacts?	Yes		We have encouraged several non-Party states to use circle hooks in longline fisheries, TEDs in trawl fisheries and modified gillnets in gillnet fisheries. See annex of work that we do in the region related to sea turtle bycatch mitigation. See comment above.	
8. Have any cooperative agreements or alliances been established with pertinent	Yes		Yes, NOAA Fisheries has worked collaboratively with World Wildlife Fund US, Pretoma, Projeto Tamar, Prodelphinus, Propenisula, WWF Greater Mekong, DINARA, CICMAR, Equilibrio Azul, Submon, Kai Marine Services, and several other groups to address sea turtle bycatch issues around the globe.	



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organizations?				
List:				

(*) Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

Resolution CIT-COP3-2006 R-1: Hawksbill turtle conservation (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R1, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:		RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY		DOES NOT APPLY
		YES	NO	
1. Has your country promoted synergies with other Conventions, treaties, international organizations, and/or regional fisheries bodies on the management and conservation of hawksbill turtles and their habitats? Indicate which one(s).		Yes		We have been a strong advocate of the IAC and CITES collaborating on hawksbill issues. We were supportive of the recent collaboration between the IAC and CITES Secretariats as described here http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/16/doc/E-CoP16-59.pdf . Further, we have been strong advocates of collaboration IAC, IATTC and ICCAT.
2 a) Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products?		Yes		It is illegal to trade hawksbill turtles and their parts in the United States. Further through the Central American Free Trade Agreement we have worked to address illegal hawksbill trade in the Dominican Republic.
2 b) Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?		Yes		Enforcement efforts at the state and national level are ongoing to enforce the ESA.
2 c) Are activities being carried out in order to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products?		Yes		Our enforcement officers work to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products.
3. Does your country support and strengthen the research and monitoring activities required to improve the scientific basis of conservation measures for the hawksbill turtle? Especially in:	Genetics	Yes		
	Migratory behavior	Yes		
	Location and conservation status of foraging habitats.	Yes		
	Location and conservation status of prey species.	Yes		
	Population dynamics at foraging sites	Yes		
	Integrity of nesting habitats	Yes		The United States supports nesting surveys and nest protection efforts on Mona Island, Puerto Rico, and Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands, the two most important hawksbill nesting sites in the United States. We also protect nesting habitat in Hawaii.



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	Others (specify)				
4. As indicated in the recommendations from FAO's Technical Meeting on the conservation of marine turtles and fisheries that was held in Bangkok in 2004 and adopted by the 26th Session of FAO's Fisheries Committee (COFI), does your country carry out any activities mentioned in a) and/or b)?	a) Evaluate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in jurisdictional waters.	Yes		All of our fisheries observers report all sea turtle information. Hawksbills are encountered less frequently than other turtle species in our fisheries, but they are noted when encountered.	
	b) Actions to mitigate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in their jurisdictional waters.	Yes		We believe that mitigation measures in longline, gillnet and trawl fisheries will likely also benefit hawksbills.	
5. Does your country apply the precautionary approach when considering proposals for seismic exploration on priority marine habitats of the hawksbill turtle?		Yes		Through the section 7 process of the Endangered Species Act, the United States evaluates all seismic activity for its impact on all protected species, including hawksbills.	
6. Indicate if your country is strengthening the protection of important nesting and foraging habitats by declaring protected areas and regulating anthropogenic activities that adversely impact these habitats.	a) Protection of nesting habitats	Y		<p>Nesting beaches of the southeastern U.S. are a mixture of public and private lands. Public conservation lands include National Wildlife Refuges (NWR), National or State or County Parks, and military installations. In Florida, approximately 40% of nesting beaches have been identified as conservation lands; in Georgia, 71%; in South Carolina, 38%; in North Carolina, 47%; and in Alabama, 22%.</p> <p>The two major hawksbill nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean, Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Mona Island, Puerto Rico, are protected as a National Park and Commonwealth Protected Area, respectively.</p> <p>The most important leatherback nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean are Sandy Point, U.S. Virgin Islands (protected as a National Wildlife Refuge); Brava and Resaca Beaches, Culebra, Puerto Rico (protected as a Commonwealth Protected Area); Vieques Island, Puerto Rico (protected as a National Wildlife Refuge); Fajardo (Northeast Ecological Corridor) on the main island of Puerto Rico (mixed ownership, only partially protected); and Maunabo on the main island of Puerto Rico (beaches are in public domain, but uplands adjacent to</p>	



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				the beaches are privately owned with the potential for future development).	
	b) Protection of feeding habitats				
7. Does your country promote exchange of technical capacity and collaborative research on hawksbill habitats among Parties as well as non Parties and other involved organizations in the Area of the Convention?	Y			Our researchers are regularly working with other countries to share information on hawksbills conservation.	

(*) Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

Resolution CIT-COP3-2006-R2: Reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R2, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1. Adopted the "Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality induced by fisheries operations", of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), including:				
A. Research and monitoring of adverse impact of fisheries on sea turtles				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect information by fishery 	Y		The United States works to observe those fisheries known to interact or likely to interact with sea turtles. See the response to the Leatherback Resolution questions for a list of our observer data related to leatherbacks, see the additional sites below for loggerhead information http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/tm/tm207/ http://nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd1104/ http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd0919/	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observer programs 	Y		http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/fr/fr75-81201.pdf	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions 	Y		NMFS conducts modeling exercises to pinpoint the areas of greatest likelihood of sea turtle / fisheries interactions. In Hawaii, the NMFS Pacific Islands Science Center's Turtlewatch project produces maps for fishery on the areas of high likelihood of interaction with loggerheads. The NMFS Southwest Science Center through the SLEUTH project is trying to better understand how Leatherbacks and swordfish use the coast of California in order to better inform management decisions. NOAA Fisheries recently developed serious injury and mortality	



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			determinations for sea turtles in US NE and Mid-Atlantic Fishing Gear. This can be found at -- http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/tm/tm222/	
• Information on non-Party vessels	Y			
• Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain information	Y		The United States works collaboratively with several countries to better understand fisheries interactions with sea turtles.	
B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:				
i) Long-line	Y		Relatively large circle hooks with certain bait combinations are required most pelagic longline fisheries.	
ii) Gillnets	Y		Restrictions on mesh-size in some gillnet fisheries, prohibition of gillnets in certain state waters, restrictions on tie-downs and gillnet length in some fisheries.	
iii) Trawling (e.g., 1. TEDs: specify legally approved TEDs, their dimensions, material, and target species for that fishery, 2. time-area closures: specify geographical area, time of closure and target species for that fishery, 3. tow times and/or 4. other measures)	Y		TEDs are required in otter trawls targeting shrimp and summer flounder in the Southeast United States. The regulations can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/fr/fr68-8456.pdf	
iv) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				
C. Training, education and dissemination				
• Training, education and dissemination activities	Y		We train our observers in safe handling and dehooking. Our training materials for observers in pelagic longline fisheries can be found at http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/species/turtles/observers.htm .	
D. Harmonization of policies and legislation				
• Modifications to instruments	Y		We develop as necessary regulations to reduce fisheries interactions with sea turtles.	
E. Capacity building				
• Creation of a national sea turtle committee/network	Y		US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries have national sea turtle programs that coordinate regularly.	
F. Financing				
• Financial support obtained to implement guidelines in this resolution		N	We do not allocate funding specifically to implement the FAO guidelines, but by our recovery actions we often are implementing the guidelines.	



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G. Socio-economic considerations				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles 	Y		NMFS Southwest Fisheries Center is conducting research to look at best practices for fisheries management to reduce transfer effects.	
H. Other aspects				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental impact studies for mariculture projects 	Y		Any Federally permitted mariculture project would have to undergo an Environmental Impact Statement which would look at the impact on listed species, like sea turtles.	
2. Sent information and documents on sea turtles created by your country to the Secretariat of the Convention? List documents.		N	All our regulations and recovery plans can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/	
3. Initiated activities that assist the Convention Secretariat in contacting non Party States through established mechanisms, especially in the area of the Convention, so that they may provide, in a cooperative spirit, the Secretariat with available data on incidental sea turtle catches in their fisheries?	Y		The US has worked with the Secretariat Pro Tempore to try and engage Canada so that they may share information on the importance of their waters for loggerhead and leatherback foraging as well as their work to better understand sea turtle bycatch in their fishery.	
4. Supports the Convention Secretariat, through established mechanisms, to commence discussions with regional fishery management organizations in order to develop Memorandum of Understandings.	Y		The United States has facilitated contact between the Secretariat and the IATTC Secretariat and the ICCAT Secretariat.	

(*) Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

Resolution CIT-COP4-2009-R5: Adaptation of sea turtle habitats to climate change

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP4-2009-R5, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1 a) Have marine and coastal habitats on which sea turtles depend been included in national plans and programs for adaptation to climate change? Specify habitats and plans	Y		The US has released in 2012 the National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy. More information can be found at http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/strategy.php	
1 b) Are these plans for adaptation to climate change being implemented?	Y		The US strategy was just released in 2012, so we are just beginning to implement the Strategy.	
2 a) Are corrective measures and measures on adaptation to climate change included within management plans and/or protection and conservation programs for sea turtles and their habitats?	Y			
2 b) Are you evaluating the corrective measures and measures on adaptation to climate change	Y			



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included within management plans and/or protection and conservation programs for sea turtles and their habitats?				
3. Have you identified any organizations or pertinent expert groups as possible partners to work on the topic of adaptation by sea turtles to climate change? Please list.		N		
4. Have you carried out research and monitoring to improve knowledge of the effects on, and vulnerability of sea turtles and their habitats, to climate change?	Y		NMFS Pacific Islands Center has conducted modeling looking at the impacts of climate change on loggerhead and leatherback nesting abundance trends to help decipher the impact of fisheries versus climate.	
5. Has your country hosted capacity building workshops for monitoring techniques and/or adaptation to climate change?	Y			
6. Has your country implemented mitigation measures for non-climatic threats as a way to improve the resilience of populations to the impacts of climate change? Specify which ones.	Y		Yes, we are in the process of implementing the measures as called for in the new Strategy. Please see http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/pdf/Marine_Ecosystems_Paper.pdf	

(*) Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

c.2 National and International Mandates

List actions that are being carried out to comply with national and international mandates (Ex: inspections, confiscations, sanctions, etc.)

The United States regularly carries out the mandates of the Endangered Species Act, which prohibits all taking of listed species, unless permitted under the ESA. Through the implementation of regulations we are working to reduce sea turtle incidental capture and mortality in fisheries. The United States regulations can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm>. Further, the United States evaluates all Federal actions that may affect sea turtles through the Section 7 process of the Endangered Species Act, as well as the environmental review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Both NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have enforcement offices that monitor compliance with existing laws and develop cases against those violating the Endangered Species Act.

d. Application[submission] of exceptions established in the Convention



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Describe in detail the exceptions allowed in accordance with article IV, item 3(a,b,d) and Annex IV of the text of the Convention, in accordance to the procedure established by the COP (Doc. CIT-COP5-2011-R2). Attach management program.

N/A

Part III (Research information)

a. _ Threats

*Describe threats (Coastal development, incidental capture, direct use, contamination and pathogens, and climate change) by species, with information on the area and activities taken to control them in the following table. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk = *Lepidochelys kempii*; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*.*

Species	Threat(s)	Actions
Lo	Incidental Capture in Fisheries	Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Lk	Incidental Capture in Fisheries	Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Dc	Coastal development (includes construction, repair, and maintenance of upland structures and dune crossovers; installation of utility cables; installation and repair of public infrastructure (such as coastal highways and emergency evacuation routes); and construction equipment and lighting associated with these activities alter nesting habitat and harm sea turtle nests, adults, and hatchlings.)	Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida. Light pollution issues adjacent to the leatherback nesting beach at Sandy Point, USVI, are still problematic but



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	<p>Depredation of eggs and hatchlings.</p> <p>Incidental Capture in Fisheries</p>	<p>some efforts have been undertaken to resolve them.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station; coyote control in the Florida Panhandle; and mongoose trapping at Sandy Point NWR.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
Ei	<p>Depredation of eggs and hatchlings</p> <p>Incidental Capture in Fisheries</p>	<p>A fence has been constructed as a barrier to hogs at hawksbill nesting beaches on Mona Island, Puerto Rico. Rat control activities have been undertaken on Buck Island Reef National Monument in the USVI. Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
Cm	Coastal development	<p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be</p>



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	<p>Depredation of eggs and hatchlings</p> <p>Incidental Capture in Fisheries</p>	<p>minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; and feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
Cc	Coastal development	<p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been</p>



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		<p>developed at coastal military installations in Florida. The major nesting beach in South Carolina, Cape Romain NWR, is a barrier island without major light pollution issues. North Carolina has extensive areas of National Seashores that are protected from development.</p>
	Depredation of eggs and hatchlings	<p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and at problem areas in Georgia; and coyote control in the Florida Panhandle.</p>
	Incidental Capture in Fisheries	<p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>

b. _ Research

Describe scientific research that is being carried out in the country relating to sea turtle population assessments including tagging, migration, and genetic studies, as well as those relating to conservation issues including habitat monitoring, fisheries interactions, disease, etc. Provide a list of references for the information used in this report and note how to obtain them when needed.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a new project with the U.S. Geological Survey to: (1) extend and adapt current mark-recapture statistical methodology and software to maximize its utility to sea turtle studies, and (2) evaluate minimum sample sizes needed to achieve desired precision in tagging studies, for a variety of realistic scenarios of population size and fidelity to nesting beach. This development will consider both nesting beach and in-water studies, focusing on the former.

c. _ Other activities

Include information on: environmental education activities, programs to establish and manage protected areas, and cooperative activities with other Party countries.



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See below the most recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife and NOAA Fisheries international capacity building activities.

The following projects were undertaken in the IAC region:

Bycatch Reduction Technology Transfer to Colombian Fishers, Fisheries Managers and Marine Enforcement (\$30,700 in FY2009 funds).

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Engineering and Harvesting Branch provided training on use and enforcement of TEDs in the Pacific and Caribbean.

Turtle Excluder Device (TED) Technology Transfer and Development in Uruguay's Coastal Non-Shrimp Trawl Fishery (\$44,000 in FY2009 funds).

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Engineering and Harvesting Branch, provided the training.

Continuing sea turtle workshops and offshore radio broadcasts to reach artisanal vessel captains in Peru (\$19,700 in FY2009 funds).

The Southwest Fisheries Science Center assisted in training artisanal fisheries crew members and observers on proper sea turtle dehooking and resuscitation techniques and promoted these practices through radio public service announcements;

TEDs University (\$50,000 from the CAFTA-DR Environmental Initiative in 2010). This was a comprehensive two-week training in TED technology for five students (from Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador), designed to establish TED extension agents in the region.

A two-part project on construction and installation of TEDs in the Uruguayan trawl fishery (\$38,700 in FY 2010 funds) Three visitors from Uruguay attended a workshop in the Pascagoula Laboratory; NOAA experts will visit Uruguay to assist with installation of NOAA-funded TEDs.

Building the Capacity of Central American Countries to Assess Bycatch (\$20,000 in FY2010 funds).

The World Wildlife Fund will collaborate with five Central American governments on use of best fishing practices to reduce bycatch in artisanal longline fisheries. WWF also conducted an introductory workshop in French Guiana in conjunction with its new law requiring TEDs (\$3,200 in FY2009).

Building capacity with Atlantic Canadian pelagic longline fishers (DFO supported). The Southeast Fisheries Science Center participated in a workshop in Nova Scotia in March 2011 to improve Canada's data collection on incidentally captured turtles to be consistent with the US Pelagic Longline Observer Program.



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Studies to look at the effect of net illumination on capture rates of sea turtles and other non-target species in Peruvian and Brazilian coastal gillnet fisheries (2011-2012). NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Science Center provided \$15,000 to ProDelphinus and Project TAMAR to investigate sea turtle capture rates in illuminated coastal gillnets.

TEDs Inspections and Trainings – FY 11-12

TED Workshops for fishers (in conjunction with DOS, section 609 visits):

- *Costa Rica; Acajutla, Pacific coast with INCOPECA , October 17-19, 2010*
- *El Salvador; Puntarenas & La Union, with CENDEPESCA, Oct. 20-22, 2010*
- *Panama; Vacamonte, with ARAP January 17-19, 2011*
- *Guatemala; Puerto Quetzal, with UNIPESCA, January 20-22, 2011*
- *Brazil; Belem with IBAMA, April 24-27, 2011*
- *French Guiana; Cayenne, with CRPMEM, April 30-May 4, 2011*
- *Ecuador; Guayaquil, Playas and Manta, with SRA, September 5-9, 2011*
- *Mexico; (Pacific) Mazatlan, Guaymas, November 13-19, 2011*
- *Honduras; Roatan, December 11-16, 2011*
- *Mexico; (Gulf of Mexico) Tampico, Campeche, March 18-27, 2012*

TED Enforcement workshops

- *Central American Regional Marine Law Enforcement Workshop: Turtle Excluder Devices. Sonsonate, El Salvador. August, 2011. CAFTA funds / NOAA I/A*

TED research

- *Flexible TED for fish trawlers; preliminary trials with fishers. Suriname, with World Wildlife Fund Guianas. May 15-26, 2011*

See annex for the report of the MTCF grants 2012

In 2012, the USFWS awarded 42 grants from the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund totaling \$1,828,495.00, which was matched by \$2,211,533.00 in leveraged funds. Field projects in 28 countries.

Part IV: Annexes

Table 1: Species Present

*Place an X in the box when the species listed is present in the oceanographic basins of your country as established in Article III of the text of the Convention. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk = *Lepidochelys kempii*; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*.*



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Species	Pacific Ocean	Atlantic Ocean	Caribbean Sea
Lo	X	X	
Lk		X	
Dc	X	X	X
Ei	X	X	X
Cm	X	X	X
Cc	X	X	X

Table 2: Important nesting sites for sea turtle conservation
SEE SPREADSHEET

- This table is intended to report information on the priority nesting beaches (for example, sites with greater abundance, endemism, genetic importance, others) for each species. For beaches that have multiple species nesting, enter that beach under the list for the primary nesting species. When entering information on nesting beaches, information is to be entered for each species independently. Indicate the names of nesting sites and the nesting season months for each site.*
- Geographic location: Specify latitude and longitude in degrees, minutes and seconds - provide one or two points of reference for nesting sites (if available).*
- Extension: Provide the total length (in Kilometers) of the nesting beach.*
- Declared protection area: Indicate if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
- Protection measures: Indicate if any type of protection measures are in place at the nesting site (For example, turtle safe lights).*
- Annual nesting abundance: Where possible, provide information on the total number of females and/or nests deposited at the nesting beach. If a specific value is not available, please provide a range for annual number of nesting females or nests*



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deposited. If data are unavailable, enter 'unknown' or 'unavailable'. The ranges for annual number of females are: 0-10, 11-100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001-5000, 5001-10000, 10001-50000, 50001-100000, >100000. The ranges for annual number of nests are: 0-10, 11-100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001-5000, 5001-10000, 10001-100000, 100001-500000, >500000. On a separate sheet, provide a brief description/justification on why each site that was mentioned is considered important (sites with greater abundance, endemism, genetic, others). Include historical information (graphic and/or tables) showing the population status of each species present at the site.

- g. Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the nesting beach. This includes flipper tagging, passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry programs. If possible, on a separate sheet or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- h. Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references, describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*



Spp	Name of Priority Nesting Site (Regular nesting)	Season	Geographic Location (Lat/Long) in Degrees, Minutes, and Seconds																				Extension (km)	Declared Protection Area	Protection Measures	Annual Nesting Abundance		Tagging Program	Tissue Sampling
			Beginning										Ending													Females	Clutches		
Lo				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
Lk				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
Dc				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
Ei				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
Cm				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
Cc				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						
				°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W	to		°	'	"	N		°	'	"	W						



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Table 3: Important in-water sites for sea turtle conservation

- a. *This table is intended to contain information for the priority in-water sites for each species. For marine habitats that have multiple species present, enter the specific site under the heading for the priority species at that site. Indicate whether or not there is in water occurrence and/or foraging sites for that species.*
- b. *Geographic location: Describe the in-water site in general, providing the name of the site and points of reference at sea, when available. If possible add the geographic location in Lat/Long coordinates.*
- c. *Declared protection area: Indicate if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
- d. *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the in-water site. This includes flipper tagging, passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry programs. If possible, on a separate sheet, or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- e. *Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*

Species		Description of geographic location	Declared Protection Area	Tagging Program	Tissue Sampling
Lo	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				
Lk	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				
Dc	In water Occurrence	Central California tagging; Aerial Surveys from Central California, OR and WA		X	
	Foraging Sites				
Ei	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites	Florida Keys: Snorkel Surveys		X	
Cm	In water Occurrence	San Diego Bay, Los Alamitos Bay, San Gabriel River, Seal Beach NWR (tagging and inwater capture)		X	
	Foraging Sites				
Cc	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites	Bahia de Ascension, Mexico		X	



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Additional survey information for multiple species are below. This list is not exhaustive and is only indicative of some of the efforts in the United States. See the spreadsheet for additional information.

Year	Season	Platform	Effort	Area
2009	May-July	Trawler	580 paired trawls	Winyah Bay, SC to St. Augustine, FL
2009	Sep-Nov	Pound Net	769 pound nets	Core and Pamlico Sounds, NC
2009	Summer	Vessel		Gulf of Mexico – 20m to US EEZ
2009	Aug	Plane (Twin Otter)	1,400 km	MA to NC in U.S. waters
2010	Aug-Sep	Plane (Twin Otter)	9,210 km	MA to Gulf of St. Lawrence, Canada
2010	May-Sept	Plane		Deepwater Horizon Response and NRDA - northern Gulf of Mexico
2010	July-Aug	Plane	7,944	Cape May, NJ to Cape Canaveral, FL
2010	May-Jul	Trawler	480 paired trawls	Bulls Bay, SC to Nassau Sound, FL
2011	Feb-Mar	Plane		Cape May, NJ to Cape Canaveral, FL
2011	May-Jul	Trawler		Winyah Bay, SC to St. Augustine, FL
2012	May-Jul	Trawler	395 paired trawls	Winyah Bay, SC to St. Augustine, FL
2012	Jan-Mar	Plane		Continental shelf waters from FL Keys to Brownsville, TX
2012	Apr-May	Plane (Twin Otter)		Continental shelf waters from Cape Canaveral, FL, to Sandy Hook, NJ
2012	Sep-Oct	Plane (Twin Otter)		Continental shelf waters from Cape Canaveral, FL, to Sandy Hook, NF
2012	Oct	Pound net	1 net x 17 days	Back Sound, NC